

Appl. No. 09/869,359

Art Unit 1751

December 29, 2003

Reply to Office Action of September 30, 2003

AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the present application.

Listing of Claims:

1. (Currently Amended) A process for preparing particles for supporting a surfactant, comprising a step of giving a defect to a coating film containing a water-soluble component, wherein the coating film is formed on surfaces of raw material particles comprising ~~at least one of~~ a water-soluble polymer, ~~and~~ a water-soluble salt, a water-insoluble inorganic substance, and substantially contain no surfactant, and the raw material particles are brought in contact with an aqueous medium in the step of giving a defect to the coating ~~film-~~ film prior to supporting the surfactant.

2-3. (Canceled)

4. (Previously Presented) The process according to claim 1, wherein the raw material particles comprise dry particles obtained by spray-drying a slurry containing the water-soluble component.

5. (Previously Presented) The process according to claim 1, wherein the amount of the aqueous medium to be brought in contact is

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from 0.1 to 10 parts by weight as water, based on 100 parts by weight of the raw material particles.

6. **(Previously Presented)** A process for preparing detergent particles comprising a step of mixing a surfactant composition and the particles for supporting a surfactant obtained by the process according to claim 1, under conditions that the surfactant composition shows a liquid state.

7. **(New)** The process according to claim 1, wherein said water-soluble polymer is selected from the group consisting of a carboxylic acid-based polymer, a carboxymethyl cellulose, a soluble starch and a sugar.

8. **(New)** The process according to claim 1, wherein said water-insoluble inorganic substance has an average primary particle size of from 0.1 to 20 μm .

9. **(New)** The process according to claim 1, wherein the content of the water-soluble polymer is from 2 to 30% by weight of the raw material particles.

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10. (New) The process according to claim 1, wherein the content of the water-soluble salt is from 5 to 78% by weight of the raw material particles.

11. (New) The process according to claim 1, wherein the content of the water-insoluble inorganic substance is from 20 to 90% by weight of the raw material particles.

12. (New) The process according to claim 1, wherein said aqueous medium is steam.

13. (New) The process according to claim 1, wherein the average particle size of said raw material particles is from 150 to 500 μm .